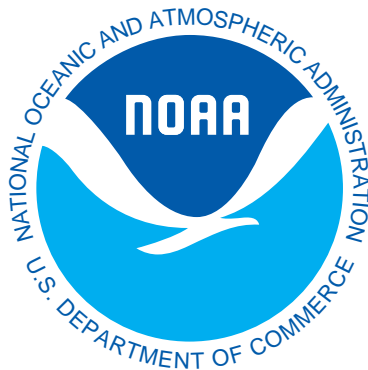


NOAA DIVERSITY PLAN

JANUARY 23, 1997

D. James Baker, Under Secretary
Terry Garcia, Acting Assistant Secretary
Diana H. Josephson, Deputy Under Secretary



PREFACE

The Diversity Plan was prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Diversity Council. The Plan has been reviewed by the Department of Commerce Office of General Counsel. Additional comments on the Plan are welcome. Please direct your comments and/or questions to the NOAA Diversity Council, c/o Diversity Program Manager, SSMC3, Room 13658, or 301-713-1965 (Voice), 301-713-0982 (TDD), or 301-713-0983 (FAX).

A MESSAGE FROM THE UNDER SECRETARY

As a premier environmental information voice, NOAA is united by an understanding of the interdependence of environmental, human, economic, and political factors. As the world changes, we can no longer depend on practices which once served us well, nor can we assume we will always be a premier environmental information voice. Our ability to cope better with change and global competition is enhanced by the positive and creative power which comes from managing diversity. With this synergy we can capitalize on the richness, potential and power of diversity. Managing diversity is an agency necessity which is firmly grounded in today's global realities.

We cannot accomplish our mission without the creative energies of all people who bring with them different approaches, solutions and innovations. Our workforce must be as diverse as our global customer base, and our systems must support that diversity. We must do a much better job of attracting and keeping the human potential we need to continue to accomplish our ever evolving mission. I believe that by nurturing the potential of diversity we will be able to achieve the fruits of creativity, flexibility and excellence that are in all of us. NOAA will be a place that reflects workforce diversity; a place that capitalizes on the diversity of ideas; a place where people want to work; a place where each of us understands our contribution to the whole; a place where contributions count and differences are used to an advantage; a place where people count, and the differences between them do not.

As a champion of diversity, I will hold myself, and NOAA leadership, accountable for modeling the appropriate behaviors that are necessary for the effective management of diversity and the creation of a positive climate of learning, innovation, flexibility, inclusion, opportunity and growth. I have the same expectation of all employees. Through such an environment, we maximize the uniqueness of each employee, thereby maximizing the uniqueness of NOAA. Through this Plan, and your commitment, we can continue to build a culture that effectively manages diversity. By doing this we can continue to be a premier environmental information voice and an employer of choice due to the value we place on our employees and our customers.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "James Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" and last name "Baker" clearly distinguishable.

D. James Baker

“Diversity is a key to the future success of the Department of Commerce. We are charged with effectively competing in a worldwide arena and, if we are to succeed in that competition, each of us must embrace the value of diversity as being critical to the achievement of our mission.”

RON BROWN

February 22, 1994

THE SEVEN DIVERSITY TENETS

INCLUSION

OPPORTUNITY

COMPREHENSIVENESS

ACCESSIBILITY

TRAINING

MANAGEMENT

EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 NOAA'S VISION STATEMENT

To achieve our goal of becoming the premiere environmental voice in the world community, we will create an inclusive, supportive, open, challenging and innovative work environment. Through this positive and creative work environment we will become an employer of choice and reach our full potential to better accomplish the present and future work of NOAA.

1.2 SOCIETAL AND WORKPLACE CHANGES

The United States is a nation of diverse people who have contributed to the richness and strength of our society. As we approach the 21st century, the nation's workforce is beginning to reflect the makeup of our diverse population and the contribution of all members of society toward our national goals. Educational opportunities and new technology are presenting job opportunities for all Americans. More than half of the United States workforce consists of minorities, women, and recent immigrants; and the trend is expected to continue.

1.3 CONTRIBUTION OF DIVERSITY TO NOAA'S MISSION

NOAA's mission is to conserve resources and to describe, monitor, and predict changes in the Earth's environment in order to ensure and enhance sustainable economic opportunities. NOAA's goal is to become the premier and authoritative voice in the promotion of global environmental stewardship. As a major component of the Department of Commerce, NOAA performs its mission in ways that support every facet of the Nation's economy and enhance the quality of life for the American people, as well as our neighbors abroad. NOAA is recognized for its assessments and predictions of environmental change, including life-threatening weather events, and for its role in stewardship of our Nation's marine fisheries and coastal resources. NOAA has a highly educated workforce comprised of atmospheric scientists, oceanographers, fisheries biologists, meteorologists, engineers, cartographers, computer scientists, administrators, and a talented technical support staff who conduct research and provide, in many areas, services critical to life and safety. In order to successfully achieve NOAA's mission, we need to attract and retain a highly skilled, competent and diverse workforce and foster a positive work environment with opportunities for advancement, training and challenges for all.

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 established a Federal policy to achieve a "...productive Federal workforce reflective of the Nation's diversity..." The National Performance Review reinforces this commitment by stressing that a diverse workforce is inherently more productive. Additionally, the Report stresses implementing strategies that encourage

diversity such as empowering employees, enhancing the quality of worklife, and forming labor-management partnerships. Fostering a positive work environment with opportunities for advancement, training, and challenges will enhance NOAA's mission.

An organization that accepts diversity and recognizes the contributions of all employees is a healthier and more productive organization than one that does not. Understanding and recognizing diversity enables an organization to capitalize on the differing views and contributions that each of its employees bring to the workplace. Such an organization provides for a richer work environment and ensures that employees work more closely with one another in carrying out organizational goals and objectives. Understanding and recognizing the contribution of diversity also enables an organization to adapt better to changes.

Managing diversity is important because of the contribution it can make to organizational decision making, effectiveness, responsiveness and productivity. Whatever the diversity, in people or systems, the benefits of factoring myriad experiences, insights and approaches into decision making can only enhance the viability of solutions, and our ability to forecast potential consequences. Integrating diversity into an organization's management practices provides opportunities to facilitate organizational change; harness employee potential; achieve performance goals; and enhance internal and external customer satisfaction; thus furthering the mission of NOAA and the Department.

NOAA's greatest assets are its people. Attitudes or perceptions exist within NOAA that result in some employees being unrewarded, undervalued, underutilized and unempowered, thereby hampering the achievement of the mission. NOAA is committed to using diversity to increase the efficiency and productivity of its workforce to better accomplish its mission.

1.4 NOAAS COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

To better enable NOAA to carry out its mission, the Under Secretary/Administrator has made diversity a key priority for all executives, managers, and employees throughout the agency. NOAA is committed to being the model employer of a talented, dedicated and effective workforce that reflects the Nation's diversity. Pursuing these objectives will require new ways of thinking and doing business throughout NOAA. It will also require institutional changes in a number of our processes and procedures, especially in the way in which we approach empowerment, motivation, and job enrichment for all employees. It will require changes in the way in which we carry out our programmatic responsibilities.

The Agency is committed to create an environment which:

- fosters and sustains diversity;
- educates the workforce on the nature of diversity;
- encourages initiatives designed to empower employees; motivates employees to achieve their highest contribution to NOAA's mission;

- enables, influences, and challenges employees to make their maximum contribution;
- encourages employees to offer differing views and suggestions toward achieving program and organizational goals without threat of retribution;
- respects and appreciates individual differences, and ensures all employees are included as full, contributing and influential team members;
- provides equitable treatment and opportunities;
- creates and maintains an inclusive approach to all systems, policies and practices which includes, but is not limited to, promotions; details; performance ratings; awards; training; appointments to boards, committees and interagency teams; and the delivery of products and services;
- is flexible regarding non-traditional quality of worklife initiatives; and
- facilitates culture change to support new behaviors.

1.5 NOAA'S COMMITMENT TO EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The NOAA Diversity Council realizes that pursuing the objectives of managing diversity will require new ways of thinking and doing business. This new way of thinking will better enable us to accomplish affirmative action objectives by focusing on whether the organization's culture is supportive of the affirmative action laws and vision. Initially, because affirmative action is law, and managing diversity is a management initiative, the Council has endeavored to separate traditional EEO concerns from the NOAA Diversity Plan so that both initiatives will be strong and viable independently. NOAA's commitment to the principles and legal obligations of Affirmative Action and EEO remains firm and unchanged, and in fact is enhanced and strengthened through the managing diversity capability.

Managing diversity initiatives complement and support Affirmative Action and EEO obligations. The chart that follows captures this concept:

VARIABLES	AFFIRMATIVE ACTION	MANAGING DIVERSITY
Protected Group	All except traditional white males	Everyone including traditional white males
Assumptions	Assimilation, monoculture	Unassimilated diversity, multicultural norms
Goal	Creation of a diverse workforce (based on protected classes.) Upward mobility for minorities and women	Management of diverse workforce. Full utilization of human resources and supportive human resource system.
Motive	Legal, moral, corporate, Social responsibility	Business necessity

2.0 NOAA'S DIVERSITY PLAN

The NOAA Diversity Plan is designed to provide (1) an umbrella plan which outlines the NOAA vision as it relates to the implementation of managing diversity; (2) a general framework so that change agents will acquire a fundamental understanding of managing diversity and its focus on inclusivity, appropriate workplace behavior, links to other human resource systems and supportive organizational systems; (3) a mechanism and primary source for the consistent and timely education of NOAA employees; and (4) a plan for NOAA-wide organizational assessments which will be a starting point for line, staff and program offices to create more individualized plans, measures and milestones which reflect their own diversity.

The plan is a living document which represents a synthesis of the thoughts, ideas, and recommendations from a broad cross-section of NOAA employees and managers, and incorporates many of the principles developed by the American Institute for Managing Diversity. However, as our journey to build a culture that manages diversity continues, modification to this plan will be necessary.

"Culture change to support diversity must be carefully managed, and not simply allowed to occur, helping the organization to remain on track and move forward."

*Marilyn Loden &, Judith Rosener
Workforce America!
Managing Employee Diversity As A Vital Resource"*

2.1 ADVOCACY

Expected Outcome: An employee population educated about the role of organizational culture and understanding differences in employee behavior; the business case for managing diversity; the inclusivity of diversity; the importance of executive support; and the culture change required to manage NOAA's internal and external diversity. Creation of a more enlightened, educated workforce by conveying messages in many fora and in a variety of ways to facilitate the education process. Managing diversity has every opportunity to become a part of the way we do business. Partnerships are established. The modeled behavior of our leaders will help educate others about managing diversity and change our culture.

OBJECTIVE:

To provide a framework¹ wherein managing diversity and supporting initiatives (for example, EEO, understanding differences and other change strategies/tools) have every opportunity to thrive by providing a solid foundation and up-front support. To create an environment of supportive systems, policies and practices which ensure that all employees have the opportunity to successfully accomplish NOAA's mission and their professional goals.

ACTIONS:

- (1) Develop a communications strategy articulating the working definition of managing diversity; outlining methods to educate employees about managing diversity and understanding differences; and marketing the NOAA Diversity Plan defining culture change as a business imperative. Use tools such as managing diversity video; manager and employee toolkits; brochures; pamphlets; regular "Diversity Corner" column in NOAA Reports; and the use of symbols throughout the organization (logo/slogan contest).
- (2) Develop NOAA-wide education strategy to ensure consistency in approach and to:
 - (a) educate top leadership on the interdependence of key change initiatives; show conceptual links with other NOAA initiatives;
 - (b) plan mandatory NOAA-wide managing diversity education symposia for executives, managers, diversity change agents, facilitators, organizational development consultants and employees on an annual basis (include train-the-trainer capability); and
 - (c) plan mandatory understanding differences curricula/workshops including train-the-trainer modules. Offer to same population as item 2(b).
- (3) Review NOAA-wide training materials to integrate managing diversity interventions, and understanding differences into existing courses; review leadership curricula for consistency with results of culture audit.
- (4) Develop proposal for NOAA-wide diversity recognition award.
- (5) Develop proposal for NOAA-wide diversity consultant initiative to imbue managing diversity interventions in day-to-day work.
- (6) Meet with line offices and provide input on the managing diversity interventions possible in their areas to assist in meeting goals.

TIMEFRAME:

FY 1997 - Immediate: duration: 6 - 12 months and ongoing

¹Using the American Institute for Managing Diversity (AIMD) model, Steps in a Managing Diversity Process, Ensures the development of a comprehensive managing diversity strategy.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS:

NOAA Diversity Manager, NOAA Diversity Council, Diversity Contacts in Line Offices, all executives, managers and employees

PARTNERS:

Human Resources, Office of Civil Rights, unions, Commerce Diversity Council, managing diversity champions, Public Affairs, employee groups

2.2 ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Expected Outcome: The business case for diversity; the gap between the future state and present state and how it can be bridged; perceptions of the quality of work life at NOAA revealed; and a determination of whether NOAA's systems, policies and practices support the NOAA vision for the organization, its employees and customers. Climate assessment tools determine what drives organization behaviors. Specific outcomes involve baseline information, needs assessment, identification of roots, behaviors, measures and plans for substantive change.

OBJECTIVE:

To take appropriate measures to modify current systems to stimulate employee creativity which leads to an environment in which all employees can fully contribute. To determine the quality of worklife at NOAA and what drives organizational behaviors.

ACTIONS:

- (1) Assemble a cross-functional diverse group (Diversity Assessment Team) to determine the best way to conduct NOAA-wide climate assessment (in-house or external vendors.) Present findings.
- (2) If internally accomplished, identify employees NOAA-wide to implement and arrange required training. If externally accomplished, identify and contract with vendor (include survey follow-up and train-the-trainers workshop). Develop timeframe for implementation.
- (3) Develop marketing/education strategy.
- (4) Conduct diagnostics.
- (5) Publish report, assessment, baseline information and recommendations.
- (6) Determine which few vital recommendations will be implemented by line, staff and program offices.
- (7) Develop measures.

- (8) Prepare managing diversity action plans to promote changes which articulate new behaviors; modify systems, practices and policies to support new behaviors; develop process of feedback.
- (9) Tie to performance plans.
- (10) Report accomplishments.

TIMEFRAME:

FY 1997 — Second through fourth quarters

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS:

NOAA Diversity Manager, Human Resources, executives, managers, NOAA Diversity Council, Diversity Contacts in Line Offices, and unions

PARTNERS:

Office of Civil Rights, managing diversity champions, employees and employee groups

2.3 FOSTERING DIVERSITY IN THE NOAA WORKPLACE: QUALITY OF WORKLIFE

Expected Outcome: Management accommodates flexible work practices to meet business objectives. Flexible work practices championed as an employee relations plus to better enable employees to balance business and employees needs and meet the worklife challenges of the present (for example, dual incomes, older employees, non-traditional families) by creating flexible and supportive systems.

OBJECTIVE:

To create a supportive environment which ensures that initiatives are created which help to balance the work and life responsibilities of employees to facilitate productivity.

ACTIONS:

- (1) Develop a process whereby the Diversity Council can hear and address worklife recommendations or concerns/issues from employees and offer recommended solutions to management for possible implementation.
- (2) Research state-of-the-art workplace accommodations. Report findings.
- (3) Research the feasibility of creating a NOAA-wide worklife resource center, hot line and customer service center as employees' "one-stop" service for worklife needs and other issues, e.g., employment referral service to address mobility, reduction in force,

downsizing and career issues in dual career or non-traditional families and other quality of worklife initiatives. Report findings.

- (4) Evaluate pertinent findings from organizational assessment and implement as needed.

TIMEFRAME:

FY 1997 — Third - fourth quarters

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS:

NOAA Diversity Manager, NOAA Diversity Council, Diversity Contacts in Line Offices, Human Resources, unions, all executives, managers and employees

PARTNERS:

Office of Civil Rights, employee groups

2.4 DEVELOPING NOAA'S WORKFORCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY AND PROMOTING CAREER INTERESTS

Expected Outcome: Employees empowered to reach professional goals and maximize contributions towards organizational mission.

OBJECTIVE:

To provide opportunities for all employees to develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities to their fullest potential, to be rewarded equitably, to ensure that these opportunities are extended to all segments of the workforce, and to increase workforce diversity at NOAA based on how current employees are appreciated.

ACTIONS:

- (1) Develop a proposal for a career development program for existing employees which includes mentoring and leadership training through intern programs for use NOAA-wide (Intern, Career Transitional, Mentoring, and Entry-Level Management Development Programs). This proposal will consider tools such as details, reassignments, assignment to special projects and task forces, rotational possibilities in the private sector, and cross-training outside of assigned duties and responsibilities, to provide a mutual exchange of employees seeking varied work experiences. Issue report and recommendations.
- (2) As a result of recommendations emanating from the organizational assessment, (action item 2.2, Organizational Assessment) identify training programs, policies or procedures which need to be modified. Recommend improvements to existing programs to facilitate professional development in order to maintain a competent workforce; upgrade skills, increase knowledge, and train current employees for the jobs of the future.

- (3) As a result of recommendations emanating from the organizational assessment phase, review all systems, such as the performance/reward system, to ensure fairness and equity. Make recommendations for improvements.
- (4) Ensure that all teams, panels, working groups are diverse; tie to understanding differences modules (action item 2.1, Advocacy).

TIMEFRAME:

Upon completion of organizational assessment

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS:

NOAA Diversity Manager, NOAA Diversity Council, Diversity Contacts in Line Offices, Human Resources, unions, employee groups, all executives, managers and employees

PARTNERS:

Office of Civil Rights

2.5 DEVELOPING NOAA'S POTENTIAL WORKFORCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY AND PROMOTING CAREER INTERESTS

Expected Outcome: NOAA viewed as a premiere agency attracting and retaining the best and the brightest high caliber diverse employees in all areas; an increased pool of prospective employees developed with specialized skills through proactivity with schools. Educate potential employees about NOAA's contribution to society and employment opportunities.

OBJECTIVE:

To develop or modify outreach programs that will attract high caliber diverse NOAA employees, and provide exposure and stimulate interest in all specialities required to accomplish NOAA's mission. To increase workforce diversity at NOAA.

ACTIONS:

- (1) Develop a proposal for NOAA-wide activities with colleges, universities and industry to promote the image of NOAA and to attract quality employees.
- (2) Identify community organizations and schools to support NOAA-wide. Line offices should establish networks with community organizations and elementary/secondary schools to enhance and promote diversity and an awareness of NOAA, its mission, impact on day-to-day lives of external customers, and career opportunities; establish NOAA-wide policy on adopted schools.

- (3) Develop proposal for NOAA-wide summer-intern program for prospective employees. Market through career awareness and orientation programs at targeted schools. Encourage employee and retiree participation/tutoring for science fairs, career fairs, and other school and community events to disseminate information about NOAA and its mission.
- (4) Promote NOAA by exhibiting at conferences, workshops, professional society meetings, etc. Develop educational, career, and visual materials that inform the public of NOAA's mission; strengthen ties with relevant professional societies.

TIMEFRAME:

Upon completion of organizational assessment

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS:

NOAA Diversity Manager, NOAA Diversity Council, Diversity Contacts in Line Offices, Human Resources, Public affairs, employee groups, all executives, managers and employees

PARTNERS:

Office of Civil Rights, NOAA University Partnership contact

2.6 MEASURES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Most key executive decisions are difficult to measure or cannot be measured or quantified statistically². Benefits such as discovery, innovation, and creativity do not always provide such results but are reflective of a positive work environment. In addition, since it is anticipated that culture change may take a decade or more, the time period of measurement must be congruent with the gestation period of learning and change; premature measures may yield erroneous results. Deep learning does not produce tangible evidence for a considerable time.

At the conclusion of the organizational assessment, an analysis of where NOAA is versus where it wants to be will be conducted. That analysis can better determine upon which few vital issues the organization should target its resources and energy. This will allow NOAA to focus on its most serious improvement needs and the development of specific measures and areas of accountability. Considering how employees described the environment, NOAA can articulate new behaviors and identify systems to be modified. Measures need to be developed within the context of an office's knowledge of its particular history, workforce, leadership, operations and other myriad variables. In other words, its culture. Until this assessment has been completed, only process and outcome measures will be established for each action item contained in this document.

²*The Fifth Discipline Field Manual*, 1994.

After the organizational assessment, measures should:

- (1) Set forth clear and decisive expectations for accountability for managing diversity with objectives incorporated into all performance plans; partner with unions as appropriate.
- (2) Align accountability with rewards for those who achieve desired outcomes; and consequences for those who fail to meet them.
- (3) Create ownership and accountability for culture change.
- (4) Charge professional support staff and facilitators to implement or support culture change as appropriate.
- (5) Use organizational assessment data to design activities and improve local environments.
- (6) Relate data back to implementation and operating plans and correlate results achieved with organizational culture feedback.
- (7) Use the data to set goals, design processes, modify systems, and develop measures for upcoming years.
- (8) Institute system of continuous feedback, improvement and measures.

3.0 PARTNERSHIPS

Because managing diversity requires fundamental modifications or changes to existing systems and processes, all employees, managers, and executives are partners in this effort. Specific partnering efforts will be established with unions, diversity councils, Human Resources, Office of Civil Rights, Public Affairs, employee groups, support services organizations, and task forces, etc. In addition, partnerships with external customers and education sources are critical. Actions involving conditions of employment will be appropriately partnered through NOAA's Partnership Councils.

4.0 RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

NOAA is committed to implementing its Diversity Plan. NOAA will provide core financial resources to support NOAA's diversity commitments.

In keeping with the spirit of re-invention and reducing the cost of government, resource requirements, both dollars and FTE, will be made available from existing programs. Additional resources for other diversity-related activities will be identified each year in Line, Program, and Staff operating plans. Operating plans will identify at least 1.5% of overall personnel compensation and benefits budgets to support training opportunities for all employees.

5.0 NOAA DIVERSITY COUNCIL

In an effort to effectively address diversity, a NOAA Diversity Council has been established and is chaired by the Deputy Under Secretary. It is composed of twelve management, six union and seven employee representatives, that reflect the organization's diversity. Management representatives were appointed to the Council to ensure that decision makers were a part of the process. Council members, representing bargaining units, were selected by their unions. Council members, representing employees at-large, were chosen from nominations. Selectees represented a wide spectrum of diverse backgrounds.

5.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Diversity Council has been entrusted to advance the NOAA mission by serving as the conscience of NOAA as it strives to manage its diverse workforce and meet current and future needs of its customer base. To this end, the duties of the Council will include, but will not be limited to, assisting NOAA management by accomplishing the following:

- (1) Developing and maintaining the NOAA Diversity Plan as a living document;
- (2) Monitoring the implementation of the Plan in line offices, providing continuous feedback on accomplishments;
- (3) Developing performance measures and milestones designed to accomplish Diversity Plan action items;
- (4) Defining and facilitating a specific process for each line office that provides for substantive feedback to NOAA leadership on their diversity plans and significant diversity accomplishments which have impacted the organization. Ensuring plans are measurable and substantive and accomplishment reports accurately reflect accomplishment;

- (5) Serving as a forum to hear quality of worklife, understanding differences and managing diversity concerns of workplace and recommend solutions;
- (6) Carrying out its responsibilities pursuant to the NOAA Diversity Plan;
- (7) Facilitating communications within NOAA on diversity issues;
- (8) Modeling behavior envisioned in the Plan; becoming educated about managing diversity through process of personal mastery, team learning and understanding differences; and
- (9) Serving as change agents in day-to-day business

APPENDIX

DEFINITIONS

(1) CHANGE AGENTS

Change agents are individuals within an organization, at any level. They are educated about managing diversity, and committed to facilitating change by modeling appropriate behaviors. They also take every opportunity to ensure that systems, policies and practices are flexible enough to work for everyone, modifying them as appropriate. Change agents include top leadership, management and employees at every level. Because managing diversity represents a major change in the management of human resources, without multi-level change agents implementation will stall. It requires support from leaders with vision, credibility and authority — our champions. A managing diversity champion actively supports the organization's commitment to managing diversity and is seen by others as a valued member of the current culture and thus has credibility as the organization moves to the new vision.

(2) DIVERSITY

Diversity is any collective mixture characterized by similarities and differences. It can refer to people, organizations, systems, etc. As a consequence, diversity can be defined as, or limited to, any dimension such as workforce diversity or functional diversity.

(3) DIVERSITY CONSULTANT

Diversity Consultants are change agents who assist the organization in ensuring systems, policies and practices (the organizational culture) work for everyone. Diversity Consultants are NOAA managers or management officials who are charged with providing support and guidance to other managers and heads of offices in the implementation of the managing

diversity strategy and in the design of local initiatives. They are change agents who assist the organization in ensuring systems, policies, practices and behaviors support managing diversity.

(4) MANAGING DIVERSITY (MD)

“Managing diversity is a comprehensive managerial process for developing an environment that works for all employees.”³ Managing diversity is a culture change process that ensures that the complexities within an organization (systems, policies and practices) do not benefit any one group more than another. Managing diversity encourages managers to enable, empower and influence employees to operate with a set of challenges and opportunities that will create a harmonious and productive working environment in which each employee may achieve his or her full potential. Managing diversity is inclusive, addresses workplace behaviors and understanding differences, and focuses on an organization’s culture and climate. With a managing diversity capability, organizations are more adaptable to future change. Managing diversity enhances our understanding of the needs of our employees and customers so our employees have a better capacity to perform their jobs, reach professional goals, and achieve NOAA’s mission.

(5) ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT (DIAGNOSTIC PHASE)

Discovering where the organization is today. This process examines systems, policies and practices to ensure they are flexible enough to support the future state environment. This phase is at the heart of managing diversity. It involves data collection to assess the organizational climate. It can consist of diversity scans (to see whether there is visible diversity), surveys which are attitudinal in nature to get a sense of what the work environment is like, cultural audits (which look at the organization’s roots that drive its systems), assessments of written and unwritten organization policies and procedures, and reviews of complaint and grievance data. Change to support the effective management of diversity must take place at a root level to be lasting.

(6) ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

“Underlying values, beliefs and principles that serve as a foundation for the organization’s management system, as well as the set of management practices and behaviors that both exemplify and reinforce those principles.”⁴

(7) UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCES

Understanding differences is the awareness and acceptance of differences among and between people both on an interpersonal and personal level. It encompasses myriad dimensions such as race, sex, age, thinking style, religion, sexual orientation, professional degrees, and functionality. This can also refer to organizations and systems (for example, field offices versus headquarters). The objective is to enhance interpersonal or interfunctional relationships.

³*Beyond Race and Gender*, R. Roosevelt Thomas, 1991.

⁴*Cultural Diversity in Organizations, Theory, Research and Practice*. Cox, Taylor, 1993.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(1) HOW ARE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION (AA) AND MANAGING DIVERSITY DIFFERENT?

The practices of AA are government initiated, legally mandated, reactive initiatives that emerged in response to America's historical treatment of women, minorities and other protected groups. The goal of AA is to ensure that our workforce reflects the community we serve through assimilation and to raise the consciousness of employees about the contributions of groups historically excluded from recognition.

Managing diversity is a non-mandated management approach to creating an environment that allows all employees and customers to reach their full potential in pursuit of the organization's mission. It excludes no one. It is proactive, business linked, requires an assessment of the organizational culture to ensure that it is supportive of inclusivity, and is an integral part of our overall mission. All three approaches to workforce issues: affirmative action, understanding differences and managing diversity are needed; however, only affirmative action is mandated by law.

(2) WHY MANAGE DIVERSITY?

Managing diversity provides a process whereby we can carefully assess where we are organizationally against where we want to be and examine or modify barriers or inhibitors which prevent us from reaching our goals. Managing diversity is the only cultural change strategy that focuses on inclusivity and ensures that the organization's roots support the new vision, initiatives and behaviors. If roots (systems, policies or practices) are not supportive, new initiatives may not succeed. Organizations must step up to the challenge of effectively managing a diverse workforce, or likely be continually plagued by high turnover, low morale, limited innovation, lagging productivity and the inability to recruit and retain the best and brightest diverse talent.

(3) WHAT IS THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN MANAGING DIVERSITY?

Leaders are responsible for acting as change agents and modeling behaviors which support the creation of a future state which maximizes the contributions of employees as they fulfill organizational goals.

Leaders are responsible for ensuring that:

- appropriate workplace behaviors are supported
- systems, policies and practices support vision
- managing diversity principles are integrated into the way of life of the organization
- the organizational culture and its systems support the vision and are responsive to environmental changes

- the environment is inclusive
- empowering, influencing and enabling others is practiced
- managing diversity is linked to other organizational change initiatives, such as reengineering, communications, education and partnerships

(4) WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE EMPLOYEE IN MANAGING DIVERSITY?

Every employee is responsible for focusing on inclusion, and appropriate and supportive workplace behavior. Each employee need not value all the differences in our external customers and within the NOAA workforce, but we should learn to acknowledge, accept and understand that similarities and differences do exist. Each employee can help create a positive work environment by identifying and working to change rigid practices that are exclusive of all employees and add no value, and by identifying behaviors and patterns of doing things, whether are conscious or unconscious, that are exclusionary. Every employee affects organizational outcomes. With each employee working on managing diversity, NOAA will move closer to an environment where all ideas and perspectives are considered in order to more effectively meet our mission.

NOAA DIVERSITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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